

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3185

INFO AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMCONSUL BELFAST

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 10691

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PINT, UK (NI)

SUBJECT: HMG REITERATES OPPOSITION TO "THIRD FORCE"

REF: (A) LONDON 10294; (B) DUBLIN 1118; (C) DUBLIN 1106

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED - PRESS REPORTS NI SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC LABOR PARTY (SDLP) LEADER GERRY FITT STATED THAT NI SECRETARY REES, DURING AUGUST 20 MEETING WITH FIVE SDLP LEADERS, GAVE "ABSOLUTELY UNEQUIVOCAL AND UNAMBIGUOUS ASSURANCES" THAT HMG WILL NOT RPT NOT PERMIT CREATION OF PROTESTANT "THIRD FORCE." FITT ALSO SAID SDLP WILL MEET WITH REES AGAIN NEXT WEEK TO DISCUSS INTERNMENT AND CONTINUED PRESENCE OF ARMY IN NI. END UNCLASSIFIED

2. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL - IN LATER AUGUST 20 MEETING WITH EMBOFFS, NI UNDER SECRETARY DENIS TREVELYAN CONFIRMED THAT HMG HAD NO INTENTION OF PERMITTING PROTESTANT THIRD FORCE OR CATHOLIC "FOURTH FORCE" IN NI. HE EXPRESSED PLEASURE WITH FITT'S STATEMENT TO PRESS AND EXPRESSED HOPE THAT REES' UNEQUIVOCAL POSITION WILL REASSURE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY AND DUBLIN. HE ALSO ACKNOWLEDGED THAT HMG IS CONTINUING ITS EFFORTS TO ENLARGE VOLUNTEER SECURITY FORCES IN NI, WHICH, HE STRESSED, CONFIDENTIAL

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WILL BE COMPLETELY CONTROLLED BY ROYAL ULSTER CONSTABU-

LARY (RUC) AND WILL INCLUDE BOTH PROTESTANTS AND CATHOLICS (REF A).

3. REGARDING FUTURE STEPS, TREVELYAN SAID HMG PLANS TO ISSUE ANOTHER WHITE PAPER SHORTLY WHICH WILL PROVIDE SERIES OF SUGGESTIONS THAT CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION MAY WISH TO CONSIDER. ALTHOUGH ISSUED AS WHITE PAPER, TREVELYAN SAID THAT DOCUMENT WILL CONTAIN IDEAS AND POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVES RATHER THAN PRECISE GOVERNMENT POLICY. HE ALSO REAFFIRMED THAT CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION ELECTION WILL NOT BE HELD PRIOR TO UK GENERAL ELECTION (REF A) AND OPINED THAT LATE NOVEMBER-EARLY JANUARY TIME FRAME CURRENTLY APPEARS MOST PROPITIOUS. FURTHER DELAY, HE SAID, MIGHT RESULT IN UNIONIST OPPOSITION TO THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION AND FRUSTRATION OF HMG'S STRATEGY OF TRYING TO INVOLVE ULSTER PEOPLE IN RESOLUTION CURRENT POLITICAL STALEMATE.

4. COMMENT: REES' ASSURANCES THAT THIRD FORCE WILL NOT BE PERMITTED AND FITT'S HELPFUL STATEMENT TO PRESS SHOULD CALM CATHOLIC COMMUNITY AND REDUCE CONCERNS EXPRESSED IN DUBLIN (REFS B AND C), THOUGH THEY MAY SPUR PROTESTANTS TO TRY TO CREATE EXTRA-OFFICIAL THIRD FORCE. WE ARE CONFIDENT, HOWEVER, HMG RECOGNIZES DANGER INHERENT IN SUCH AN ORGANIZATION AND WILL USE ALL REASONABLE MEANS TO DISCOURAGE FORMATION OF EXTRA-OFFICIAL THIRD FORCE. IT IS ALSO CLEAR THAT HMG WILL CONTINUE ITS EFFORTS TO CREATE VOLUNTEER SECURITY FORCE UNDER CONTROL OF RUC WHICH INCLUDES REPRESENTATION FROM BOTH COMMUNITIES.
END CONFIDENTIAL
SOHM

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